

Now, last year we began to close the doughnut hole, and this year the pharmaceutical industry has to give discounted prices to seniors in the doughnut hole. Mr. RYAN would undo that. No more discounted prices for seniors in the doughnut hole. That's eating into the obscene profits of the pharmaceutical companies. So they've got a little provision in this bill. The doughnut hole is back. Make the world safe for doughnut holes. That's the Ryan path to prosperity.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I don't think so. It seems to me to be the path to poverty for seniors. And it goes way, way beyond that.

Our colleague from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, has joined us. Ms. LEE, if you would care to comment. I know this is an issue you are deeply concerned about.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Well, since, like PETER, I spent 6 or 7 hours on the floor of the House some years ago, PETER, I guess the 1990s, when we were fighting against the inevitable doughnut hole, we held the vote open—I shouldn't say "we." The Republicans held the vote open for at least 6 or 7 hours. I think we voted at 5 a.m. when the last arm was twisted. I think someone had a broken arm in order to ensure the doughnut hole was in.

We, of course, have come back, Democrats, and created the Affordable Care Act. And I tell you, every senior center I have gone through since the famous passage of the Affordable Care Act, seniors have said, "Thank you. Thank you." If anyone has an 84-year-old mother—I just lost my mother, but our conversations centered around the enormous cost of prescription drugs and how relieved she was to, at that time, to have had some relief from the doughnut hole.

Now, as we watched our friends just a few, maybe about an hour or so ago, I hope there was some camera view of the glee that was shown when there was a suggestion that we would shut the government down and, in essence, implode, if I can use that on the floor of the House, any budgeting conversation that makes sense, such as the fact that what we are doing now with the CR is dated and old, it is passe, it is cutting into funding for a present year. What it's doing tomorrow, which is what the groundwork is being laid, is literally destroying the systems as we know it. Sixty-six percent of the seniors don't like this plan.

But I want to throw something out. Let me let them understand what the plan is. The plan is block grants, block grants given to disparate State governments, of which we have no control over, to be able to manipulate and play with Medicare. What sense does that make? Block grants that will in fact be able to be used for whatever we want to use.

The State of Texas, for example, received \$3.2 billion in education funds through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. Where is it my good

friend? It is in the rainy day fund, never used for schools. Can you imagine block grants for Medicare? Can you imagine the nursing homes that will be closed through Medicaid, and then, of course, seniors getting Medicare? And then they shout for joy not only for shutting down the government over the next 2 days, but they shout for joy for the kind of budget that they believe they will be able to—they whet their appetite that they will be able to do for 2012. They will implode this country as we know it.

We want budget cuts. We don't want to see the government shut down. But there is a morality and a character and an integrity, and there is called a heart. And I like what you are saying there. The Republican budget would destroy Medicare. And I just want to say this. We have been around this block before. I heard one Republican leadership say some years ago, "Over my cold dead body." The opposition to my President, who was a great hero of Texas, Lyndon Baines Johnson, even when he tried Medicare, there were those who said how it would destroy America, how it was going to undermine America. And look where we are today. How many lives have we saved because seniors had Medicare?

I see that there is this effort to bury this program that has kept the grandmothers and granddads of America's children alive for them to be able to see their grandchildren grow up because they have had good health care. Where is the morality?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, we seriously question the morality of the proposal that's being put forward by the Republican caucus.

You said something that I want to focus in on. The details are important. We talked about Medicare and the end of Medicare as we know it. And basically, as Mr. DEFazio was saying, it's a program in which Medicare becomes privatized. The money is turned over to the insurance companies; our future, our seniors' future turned over to the insurance companies and their whims.

But you also raised a very, very important point. And that is all across this Nation there are millions of Americans who are in nursing homes who now depend upon the Medicaid program, Medicaid program for the payment to the nursing homes. In the budget program, there is the block granting of the Medicaid program, and therefore the likelihood that the payments to the nursing homes will be reduced or end and those people will not be able to get care in the nursing home.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

THE BUDGET CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California may proceed.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I would love to see what that message is. I think we got some sense of it earlier in the day. And I suspect it speaks to the issue of the continuing resolution, and it is the effectuation of the promise he made earlier in the day that should the legislation that passed here about an hour-and-a-half ago, 2 hours ago, that is the continuing resolution, should it arrive on his desk, he will veto it. I haven't seen it, but I will bet that's what's in that envelope.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. If you could yield for a moment, I want to thank the gentleman for the clarification, for separating out. I want to add something. Medicare is a program that is going to be wholly privatized and income driven without any basis in substance; meaning, plainly, if you are more wealthy, this has nothing to do with how you would do Medicare today, as someone suggested that you staggered the amounts on income. This has to do with, if you can even get Medicare, it will be because you have enough money to get Medicare because it will be in that system.

Then, of course, there is some little secret backroom corner where they throw something out about a public system that is not even defined.

But you make a very good point about nursing homes, which I have a lot in my district. In fact, we are always hearing from them regarding maintaining their status. And certainly we are very keen to make sure that these nursing homes meet their own standards. But they provide refuge and rest, if you will, for not only the seniors, but the frail and the disabled.

And I just want to paint this picture for you, Mr. GARAMENDI. I just want to paint the picture for you of no room at the inn, lights out, doors wide open, and the drumbeat playing as people are being rolled out of nursing homes in wheelchairs, with crutches, some on beds. Maybe we can just imagine the tragic scenes of Hurricane Katrina, when nursing home residents were pouring out of nursing homes in the wake of the disaster of Hurricane Katrina. Well, let me tell you, we've got Hurricane Ryan, and there is a disaster coming. And, frankly, with all good intentions of our good friends on the other side of the aisle, if we had sat down at the table of compromise and projected how we can best serve America by reducing the deficit, the debt, and recognizing that we have morality and we have values that will help this country.

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Might I just say that we are talking about seniors, but don't forget there are many, many families that take their children to pediatricians on Medicaid, and that's their primary care provider just like Medicare.

So I would just simply add this word that I am not ready to bury Medicare